

December 14, 2007

Gehrig Johnson, Superintendent
MSAD 1
PO Box 1118
Presque Isle, ME 04769

Dear Superintendent Johnson:

Thank you for the Reorganization Plan that you submitted on behalf of MSAD 1 and MSAD 32 on November 30, 2007 for Department review for compliance with the school reorganization law, P.L. 2007, chapter 240, Part XXXX.

I recognize how much time, effort and thoughtful work is required to complete a reorganization plan and appreciate the efforts made, to date, by all those involved.

Members of my staff and I have reviewed the submission and offer the comments and notes listed below to assist you in completing the plan. If you make any substantive change(s) to any part of the plan beyond those listed below, please be sure to note those on the Updated Reorganization Plan Cover Sheet Checklist, along with notation of those items that have changed per the notes contained in this response.

General Documentation (Submittal Sheet)

- The Reorganization Plan Submittal Sheets (2) are missing; please include these 2 pages with authorized signatures with your revisions.
- The Reorganization Plan Cover Sheets - Checklist (3) are missing; please include these 3 pages with your revisions.
- The actual number of students for which the proposed RSU was fiscally responsible as of October 1, 2006 was 2,398. I am making you aware of this as this is the enrollment number that will be used in determining Essential Programs and Services funding.

As your Reorganization Planning Committee begins to work on the details of the plan, please take the following recommendations into consideration:

As you prepare a plan for the size, composition, apportionment and method of voting for the new regional school unit board, I encourage you to review the information and examples available on the following Department of Education website on “Determining Voting Method”:

www.maine.gov/education/supportingschools/votemethod.html

It is important that each regional school unit’s plan address the disposition of debt in accordance with 20-A MRSA 1461(3)(A)(6) and in sufficient detail to provide clear direction for the new regional school unit with respect to the options outlined in 20-A MRSA Section 1506 on debt liability . Please provide further description of the disposition of debt that addresses these details; and please consider using the language offered in the Drummond Woodsum workshop materials.

Each regional school unit’s plan must provide an estimate of the cost savings to be achieved by the formation of a regional school unit and how these savings will be achieved in accordance with 20-A MRSA 1461(3)(A)(12) and in sufficient detail to provide clear direction for the new regional school unit. Please provide the information regarding estimated cost savings; and please consider using the guidance offered in the Drummond Woodsum workshop materials.

A model for budgeting for system administration is available at www.maine.gov/education/supportingschools/planning.html.

The Department of Education will be issuing an RFP to procure routing software to be available statewide. It is the Department’s intent to issue the RFP early in 2008 and have a contract signed with a vendor as soon thereafter as possible so that the software will be available to RSUs and municipalities as soon as possible. SAUs may begin to work with the system in FY 2008-2009 but will not be able to budget any cost savings until FY 2009-2010.

SUBMISSION OF REVISIONS:

Please provide the additional materials to complete your plan by February 1, 2008. Please include:

- Any additional data required
- An updated Submittal Page with Signatures
- An updated Cover Sheet Checklist
- A copy of this Response from the Commissioner.

I will respond no more than 14 days after the revisions/additional materials are refiled with the Department. As you are the contact person identified on the Submittal Sheet, this response is addressed to you but with the understanding that you will share it with your school administrative unit board members, RPC members and others involved with this Reorganization Plan.

Finally, what I am reviewing for approval is a plan (or a submission, if the plan is incomplete) which is by its very nature prospective, with steps yet to be taken or finalized; and any review comments or approval given are in relation to the elements required under P.L. 2007, chapter 240, Part XXXX but not the legality of all the activities proposed. Thus, I strongly recommend that you have your own legal advisor(s) review the details of any particular transaction proposed in your plan (particularly with respect to the disposition of property, to debt, and to employee contracts/relations) as you proceed, to ensure the legality of the steps you'll be taking to implement the plan. If that review leads to any substantive changes in any parts of your plan, please be sure to submit an amended plan to the Department for our review and our file.

Again, my sincere thanks for your efforts.

Sincerely,



Susan A. Gendron
Commissioner of Education

cc: Gehrig Johnson, Superintendent, MSAD 32